

# 25 Spiritual Exercises



**The Guide To The  
Spiritual Renewal  
Pledge Sheet**

**Redeemer Lutheran Church & School**

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## **How to Use this Book**

Before we even begin to think about financial commitments to our capital campaign we are taking time as a congregation to reflect on our spiritual commitment to the Lord. All meaningful financial pledges to our God grow out of a personal faith strengthened by His Word and Sacraments. The spiritual exercises described below are all in some fashion or another based on getting us deeper into God's means of grace. (See the Means of Grace booklet for a detailed presentation on how God's Word and Sacraments are the only true vehicles for strengthening faith.)

This booklet is the companion to the Spiritual Renewal Pledge Sheet. The 25 opportunities for spiritual growth listed on that sheet are explained in more detail herein.

Study the list. Check this booklet for details on the exercises that interest you and then choose one or more to which you are willing to commit. Check that one or more off on the pledge sheet and bring it to church on Spiritual Renewal Sunday – February 17. If you are not able to bring it to church that Sunday, bring it in the following week or mail it to the church office.

### **Worship**

#### **1. Increase my worship attendance.**

This is the heart and soul of spiritual growth. It's God's design for us to hear the Word preached and to receive Holy Communion with the body of believers. If worship is not part of your regular schedule consider increasing. It is a wonderful way to enhance your spiritual growth in Christ. "Let us not stop meeting together as some are not in the habit of doing, but encourage one another and all the more as we see the day drawing near." (Hebrews 10:25)

**2. Read and meditate upon the Scripture readings for Sunday's worship.**

These readings can be found in the monthly newsletter or by calling the church office, 772-286-0911, or emailing Kristen, [kcruz@redeemerstuart.com](mailto:kcruz@redeemerstuart.com). This discipline will help you focus on what the Lord wants to teach you and prepare your heart and mind to receive His instruction. Better yet, let the reading guide your prayer life for the week. "Thy Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." (Psalm 119:105)

**3. Memorize words of a hymn or praise song.**

Perhaps you will do more than one over the next several months. St. Paul wrote in Colossians 3:16, "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly teaching and admonishing one another with all wisdom, singing Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thanksgiving in your hearts to God." Music teaches, inspires, and provides a way to share the faith. Martin Luther considered the music of the church as important as the preaching of the Word.

**4. Listen actively to the sermon. Live out the Word.**

Taking notes for a sermon message is helpful to keep awake and engaged. In addition, a sermon becomes more effective when it is translated into life, shared, and prayed. Peter says, "It was revealed to angels that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the Good News to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look." (1 Peter 1:12)

**5. Invite someone to worship.**

When you invite someone to worship you are telling him/her there is something significant here: God's presence. Then, if you get a chance to explain the worship event, it makes it even more meaningful to him/her and you. "Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel

before the Lord our Maker! For He is our God and we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand.” (Psalm 95:6-7)

**6. Join Pastor’s prayer group Sundays at 7:45 a.m.**

Prior to the 8:30 a.m. worship, a group meets in Pastor Dave’s office at 7:45 for 15 minutes of prayer. The group prays for the worship services, for all the volunteers, the music, the sharing of the Word, the effectiveness of the shared Word, and the coming of the Holy Spirit. Each person prays in his/her unique way. Jesus teaches, “If you then who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him.” (Luke 11:13)

**7. Come early to worship for meditation and prayer**

There is a time to speak with your neighbors in worship. There is also time for quiet. Both are important. The quiet meditation could include reading one or more of the Scriptures for the day, and praying about an openness to hear, believe, and live the Word. Quiet also helps the mind get clear of the worldly distractions that will try to invade your time with the Lord and His people. “The Lord is in His holy temple; let all the earth be silent before Him.” (Habakkuk 2:20)

**8. Serve in the house of the Lord.**

When I was young it was ok to watch the game, but I learned more by being IN the game. It helped me focus. This could also be true for you - be involved in serving in God’s house rather than just being a bench warmer. Greet; usher; read; help with communion, the camera system, the screen system; serve as an acolyte or crucifer. All are options. “I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness.” (Psalm 84:106)

## **Personal and Daily Devotion**

### **9. Pray a table prayer.**

Some are in the habit of chowing down without giving much thought to thank the One who provided the food. Whether it is a moment of silent thanksgiving, a recited prayer, or prayer off the cuff, any prayer is welcome by the Lord and helps us not take for granted His blessing. “Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest and let Thy gifts to us be blessed,” is one sample. If you have little children the prayer could be as simple as, “Thank you, Jesus, for our food. Amen.” The Small Catechism has some suggestions. The Lord’s Prayer is another option. “The eyes of all look to You, O Lord, and You give them their food at the proper time. You open Your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing.” (Psalm 145:15-16)

### **10. Read a daily devotion.**

Devotion means to devote some time to reading a portion of the Bible, reading a person’s thoughts on that Scripture, and prayer. It can be done solo or with others. If you have children, make it into ritual, like during a specific time of day (before bed or after dinner or before school), or use a candle. The pledge sheet suggests some options. Or talk to the pastors for help. “Like newborn infants long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation.” (1 Peter 2:2)

### **11. Use the Psalms as a prayer guide.**

There are 150 Psalms. Psalm 119 has 22 parts, one for each letter in the Hebrew alphabet. Some Psalms are short, others long. Use your discretion in dividing them up. If you have a study Bible, it will help you understand the Psalm and its context. This would help guide your prayers. Psalms are helpful because they tell it like it is. They are expressions of God’s faithful people who are facing a myriad of joys and challenges. Jesus used and quoted the

Psalms. “Be filled with the Spirit addressing one another in psalms....”(Ephesians 5:18b-19a)

## **12. Pray Martin Luther’s Morning and Evening Prayer.**

Some people just know how to put things into words. These two prayers by Martin Luther pack a punch. Find a place to put your prayer tent so that each day, morning and evening, you will pray these simple prayers. “Pray without ceasing.” (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

## **13. Pray for others on the prayer list.**

Praying for others is not difficult. What may make this challenging is praying with someone. Rather than politely saying, “I’ll pray for you,” do it right then. The prayer does not have to be elaborate. It can be done by phone, text, Facebook, or any creative way. What a blessing to lift up others in prayer! Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 1:11, “You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.”

## **14. Keep a prayer journal.**

Many times we pray and fail to realize and give thanks for how the Lord answers - yes, no, not yet, or I have a different plan. Jesus says, “If your son asks for an egg, will you give him a scorpion?” Of course not. Be amazed through this practice how true it is!

## **15. Fast once a month.**

Fasting means going without something for a period of time in order to focus on the Lord and the Word, and to realize that “a person does not live on bread alone.” The essentials are God’s Word and prayer. Your fast may be skipping food for 24 hours or just a lunch. It could also be skipping electronics like cell phones, texts, Facebook, telephones, etc., for a period of time and using the quiet for



reflection on God's Word and prayer. Jesus went 40 days without food. (Matthew 4:2)

**16. Make use of private confession/absolution with Pastor.**

Confession is good for the soul, and even better when paired with the personal forgiveness of Christ Jesus (absolution). Christians find this private aspect very freeing of things that weigh on their consciences. Practice once, once a week, or several times a month. Remember all things shared with the pastor are private, between you, him, and God. "If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)

**17. Become a spiritual mentor or be mentored.**

This is not just being or having a friend. A mentor is a person who desires to build up your faith and holds you accountable for how you are living out that faith. A mentor asks the hard questions and strives to keep you on track in your walk with the Lord. Mentors have to be trustworthy, honest, confidential, and loving. "Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another." (Proverbs 27:17)

**Grow in the Knowledge of Christ**

**18. Attend Pastor's Discovery Class once this year.**

A follower of Jesus is always learning. It would be beneficial for you and your family to take Pastor's Discovery Class this coming year. The class is 10 weeks long and covers the essentials of the Christian faith. Learning the fundamentals of the faith will not only strengthen your faith but will also shed new light on matters of faith.

**19. Join a Bible study at church or sponsored by Redeemer.**

Every Christian should take advantage of opportunities to learn from their pastor as he teaches the faith. When we

learn the faith we not only grow our understanding but also grow our faith. Consider these Bible passages:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also the Greek.  
Romans 1:16

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. Romans 10:17

So faith is created and sustained by the Word of God. There are a number of Bible studies offered at Redeemer throughout the week. See the Sunday bulletin for a schedule or call the church office.

**20. Read a Psalm every other day.**

If you read a Psalm every other day will get your through the entire book in a year with some time to spare. It also gives you a couple days to think about each Psalm and pray it. It would be helpful to have a study Bible that gives you background on each Psalm and explains some of the more difficult passages.

**21. Twice this year read the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John and Paul's letters of Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians. Use as prayer guide.**

If you are too busy to read the entire Bible in one year, then start with a sampling. One could come up with several different samplings of the Bible, but not many would get to the heart of God's message like these few books of the Bible. The Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) are witness accounts of the life and ministry of Jesus the Christ. They detail God's coming to earth in Jesus, Jesus' earthly ministry, and the focus of God's work through the death and resurrection of Jesus for the forgiveness of sins. The letters of St. Paul (Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians,

and Colossians) are short books written to some churches going through various trials and struggles as bodies of believers. In these books you'll not only meet Jesus and His will for your life, but will also receive some guidance for believers of Christ that gather around His Word and Sacraments.

**22. Purchase an ESV Study Bible and pick one book of the Bible and read the text and the notes. Use what you learn to guide your prayer life for that week.**

The new Lutheran Study Bible is a real blessing for the Church. It is the first study Bible published by conservative and confessional Lutherans for Lutherans. The notes on the bottom of each page will help you understand the Bible. The maps, charts and timelines will also help.

For this spiritual exercise, all you will need to do is pick one book of the Bible and over the course of the next year read it over a few times, including the notes in the Study Bible. Become an expert in the notes in the Study Bible and become an expert in that book of the Bible. Let your knowledge of it build you up in the faith of Christ.

**23. Read four books the pastor recommends for spiritual growth and renewal.**

There are many faithful and helpful books written to help explain faith in Christ and matters in theology. Ask a pastor to give you some suggestions for some reading that will challenge your faith and help you to grow spiritually.

After you've finished reading a book, take some time and explain what you've learned to a friend, family member, or neighbor. Sharing what you've learned is another way to reinforce what you have read. It also helps you articulate matters of faith, which will help you in sharing your faith when the opportunity presents itself.

## **24. Read through Martin Luther's Small and Large Catechisms.**

Reading through the Catechisms on a yearly basis is an excellent spiritual exercise. The Small Catechism was designed by Martin Luther to be the daily handbook for the baptismal life. As such, it is important to read and meditate on the Small Catechism on a daily basis. Reading a short section of the Small Catechism along with one's daily Bible reading is a great spiritual exercise.

The Large Catechism fleshes out the Small Catechism. In the Large Catechism, Luther takes special care to explain a Christian understanding of the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, Baptism, and the Sacrament of the Altar. With the Sacrament of the Altar, Luther takes up Confession and Absolution. Along with reading the Small Catechism, it is a wonderful spiritual exercise to read the Large Catechism every year.

## **25. Memorize a Bible verse every other week during lent.**

The Bible says that "the Word of God is living and active, sharper than a two-edged sword." (Hebrews 4:12)

The Word is powerful because it is about Jesus. The prophet Ezekiel was instructed to physically eat the scrolls because his life and ministry was to be all about the Word of God. We're not suggesting you eat the Bible, but making it a part of who you are by committing it to memory is helpful and spiritually beneficial. The season of Lent is a great opportunity to memorize some of God's Word so that it becomes a part of who you are. Using the Small Catechism, select a verse or two from each of the six chief parts (Ten Commandments, The Apostles' Creed, The Lord's Prayer, Baptism, Confession, and Lord's Supper) and commit them to memory. This would be a great activity to do with your family around the dinner table.